

1 **What is claimed is:**

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3 **1.** A system for communicating commercial transaction information between a Seller
4 and a plurality of Buyers over a distributed data processing system, comprising:

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6 (a) a single database for maintaining a plurality of user interface metadata
7 elements including at least component identifications and component properties;

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9 (b) a visual rule model for configuring a plurality of graphical user interface
10 dialog pages utilizing said metadata and a plurality of dialog rules;

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12 (c) a plurality of rendering engines each adapted to respond to commands from
13 said visual rule model; and

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15 (d) a dialog manager for passing at least said metadata elements to an
16 appropriate one of said plurality of rendering engines in order to dynamically constrict a
17 plurality of graphical user interface screens in said distributed data processing systems in
18 order to allow the communication of information between said Seller and said plurality of
19 Buyers necessary related to a potential commercial transaction.

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21 **2.** A system according to Claim 1, wherein plurality of rendering engines include a
22 hyper-text mark-up rendering engine.

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24 **3.** A system according to Claim 1, wherein a communication connection is established
25 between said Seller and said plurality of Buyers which is a relatively low bandwidth
26 communication channel.

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4. A method according to Claim 3 wherein said relatively low bandwidth communication channel comprises an internet connection.

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1 5. A method of conducting computer-moderated commercial transactions, comprising:

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3 (a) providing a single database which contains product metadata relating to
4 objects of computer-moderated commerce;

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6 (b) providing a plurality of alternative rendering engines for constructing a
7 plurality of graphical user interface screens relating to said objects of computer-moderated
8 commerce;

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10 (c) providing a dialog manager which can be utilized to provide commands to
said plurality of alternative rendering engines;

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12 (d) during interaction with a customer in a computer-moderated commercial
13 transaction, utilizing said dialog manager to pass said product metadata from said single
14 database to a particular one of said plurality of alternative rendering engines to
15 dynamically construct a series of graphical user interface screens which include active and
16 passive portions for presenting a plurality of product options to said customer and to
17 record said customer's selection.
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20 6. A method according to Claim 5, wherein plurality of rendering engines include a
21 hyper-text mark-up rendering engine.
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23 7. A method according to Claim 5, wherein a communication connection is
24 established between said Seller and said plurality of Buyers which is a relatively low
25 bandwidth communication channel.
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8. A method according to Claim 7 wherein said relatively low bandwidth communication channel comprises an internet connection.

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9. A method according to Claim 5 wherein the rendering engines comprise at least three engines written in a different programming language.

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10. A method of conducting a computer-moderated commercial transaction between a Seller and a Buyer, comprising:

(a) providing a distributed data processing system including a relatively low-bandwidth communication channel between said Seller and Buyer;

(b) providing a single database under the control of said Seller which contains metadata related to the subject of said commercial transaction;

(c) providing a plurality of alternative rendering engines each of which is responsive to rendering commands which is in a different programming language;

(d) providing a dialog manager program under the control of said Seller which moderates the passing of metadata and rendered objects over said distributed data processing system to said Buyer in the form of graphical user interface screens;

(e) passing transaction information to said Buyer over said relatively low-bandwidth communication channel of said distributed data processing system in the form of graphical user interface screens which confine particular relevant portions of said metadata and the output of a particular appropriate one of said plurality of alternative rendering engines; and

(f) receiving transaction selections from said Buyer over said relatively low-bandwidth communication channel of said distributed data processing system through monitoring of interaction between said Buyer and said graphical user interface screens.

